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rats are only found at the stage of local place infection, and says, "The theory that an epizootic in rodents is the cause of an epidemic among human beings is a pernicious theory, not so much because it is only half true, but because the modern tendency to put rat destruction in the forefront of preventive measures diverts the attention of the authorities from more important details."<sup>a</sup>

Fleas: In opposition to the theory of transmission by fleas, Captain Tucker says that the rat flea (*pulex pallidas*) has not been found on man, and that if fleas could transmit plague it would be a contagious disease. This has been disproved.<sup>b</sup>

Captain Tucker's theory, then, is that, as in China, the soil in India is saturated with human and animal excreta, the subsoil poorly drained, and a congested population lives in close contact with the soil, their standard of health being lowered by insufficient or innutritious food, and their dwellings having poor light and ventilation. In this way the plague bacillus gains access from the soil to man.

After giving several illustrations from his wide experience in Poona, which seemed to prove that there was soil infection, Captain Tucker speaks of house infection as follows: "People can return to their shops in evacuated areas for the purpose of carrying on their trade by day with impunity, so long as they leave them for the health camp before the sun sets; and the explanation of this curious fact \* \* \* appears to me to be that when there are several persons asleep in a crowded room with every window and door shut the temperature inside the house rises considerably, with the result that the contained air thus rendered lighter ascends, and hence the relatively heavy cold air external to the house tends to produce a liberation of the ground air into the hot room. This ascent of the ground air would be certainly accompanied by an ascent of minute particulate matter present in the contaminated soil."

In view of the abundance of bacterial flora present in the soil of a native dwelling, disinfection of a plague-infected house of the poorer class seems useless.

### *Reports from Calcutta—Inspection of vessel—Cholera and plague mortality.*

Passed Assistant Surgeon Sprague reports, May 26, as follows:

During the week ended May 21, 1904, bill of health was issued to steamship *Bantu*, bound for Boston and New York, with a total crew of 59. The usual precautions were taken. Effects of 48 Lascars were

<sup>a</sup> Neither the experience gained during the second epidemic in Sydney in 1902 (Report: paragraphs 229, 231), nor the experience of workers generally in India, nor my own observations lead me to agree with the theory that rats do not play the most important rôle in bringing plague to a previously uninfected locality. Time after time I have seen plague break out in a previously healthy chawl, on floors some feet above the ground, and trace the disease to the presence of dead rats in the immediate vicinity.

<sup>b</sup> The observers in Sydney believe (Report: para 300) that fleas play a very important part in transmitting plague from rats to man. My observations on this point are necessarily limited; and the universal prevalence of fleas in the Indian household makes it hard to determine whether a given crop of fleas came from infected rats. However, in the case of the daughter and wife of the U. S. consul at Bombay, as shown in my letters of March 26 and April 2, 1904, there seems little doubt that fleas were concerned in transmitting plague from an infected rat to human beings. In spite of the criticisms offered, Captain Tucker's observations must be given much weight, because of his wide experience. Only by special study of the points debated can definite conclusions be reached.

disinfected, rat guards were placed on wharf lines, cargo compartments were fumigated.

During the week ended May 21, 1904, there were 134 deaths from plague in this city, the same number as for the previous week. The daily reports indicate very little if any reduction for the current week. Cholera has increased to 114 deaths, most of the cases being among the Hindoos, as before reported.

In Bengal, for the week ended May 14, 1904, there were 432 cases and 345 deaths from plague. In all India, for the week ended May 7, 1904, there were 49,804 cases, with 41,607 deaths. In the Punjab there was an increase to 34,685, leaving only 7,000 for the rest of the Empire. In all the other presidencies or provinces there has been a reduction.

#### ITALY.

#### *Report from Naples—Inspection of vessels—Prophylaxis of paludism—Antidysentery serum.*

Passed Assistant Surgeon Eager reports, June 6, as follows: During the week ended June 4, 1904, the following ships were inspected at Naples and Palermo:

#### NAPLES.

Date.	Name of ship.	Destination.	Steerage passengers inspected and passed.	Pieces of large baggage inspected and passed.	Pieces of baggage disinfected.	Number of steerage passengers recommended for rejection.
June 1	Sardegna .....	New York .....	583	95	890	16
1	Romanic .....	Boston .....	747	190	1,192	35
2	Gallia .....	New York .....	243	60	520	7

#### PALERMO.

May 30	Napolitan Prince .....	New York .....	218	75	325	29
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#### *Laveran's "Prophylaxis of Paludism."*

The recent work of Laveran, *Prophylaxie du Paludisme*, is an interesting indorsement of the protective measures against malaria that have been adopted by modern hygienists. He accepts the practical preventive recommendations which are the outgrowth of his announcement in 1880 and his subsequent communications of the causative factor in malarial diseases. Laveran's formal indorsement of the technique of the modern antimalaria campaign attracts particular interest in Italy, where the original announcement of the eminent French army surgeon received its principal corroboration through the work of Marchiafava, Celli, and Golgi, and where, in recent years, the Government has expended large sums of money in efforts to redeem wide areas of land, such as the Roman Campagna, and many places in southern Italy, Sicily, and Sardegna—a once prosperous and healthful country, but now desolate from malaria. Laveran's new book indorses in particular the protection of man against the bites of mosquitoes, the prophylactic administration of quinine to exposed persons, the cleaning up of bad lands, and the betterment of individual hygiene.

#### *Antidysentery serum.*

Much attention is being attracted, especially in Italy and England, to the experiments at present being made in Ceylon by the Italian